

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Aug. 30, 2012

CONTACT: Jeff Mammenga, Media Coordinator, (605) 773-6000,
Jeff.Mammenga@state.sd.us

State Historical Society puts 1912 State Fair film footage on Digital Archives

PIERRE, S.D. – To coincide with the running of this year's South Dakota State Fair from Aug. 30-Sept. 3, the South Dakota State Historical Society recently added film footage online of the 1912 State Fair to the South Dakota Digital Archives.

The film shows fair goers navigating through Huron's dirt streets next to automobiles and horse drawn wagons, the fairgrounds with fair buildings and vendors, along with a merry-go-round, the grandstand and racetrack.

Also shown are a biplane and pilot preparing for takeoff, horse and motorcycle races, and a dance performed by American Indians from the Crow Creek Indian Reservation.

The film's run time is 17 minutes, 34 seconds. A link to the film can be found at the State Historical Society's website, www.history.sd.gov. Link to the Archives page and click on "1912 State Fair" under "Archives Most Visited."

"This film footage, now 100 years old, offers an excellent window into the activities, events, and participants in the 1912 South Dakota State Fair," said Chelle Somsen, state archivist. "The goal of the South Dakota Digital Archives is to make the state archives collections more accessible to the public, and we are proud to feature the footage from the state fair."

The 1912 State Fair had approximately 100,000 visitors and ran from Monday, Sept. 9-Friday, Sept. 13. A number of towns and counties promoted themselves through special exhibits. The fair featured a number of "special days," including Children's Day, Women's Day, German Day, Sportsmen's Day, Old Soldiers' Day, Newspaper Men's Day and Governor's Day.

Hiram F. Johnson, governor of California and vice-presidential running mate of Theodore Roosevelt, spoke at the fair, as did South Dakota Gov. Robert S. Vessey.

One monoplane and two biplanes flew at the fair, with six showings daily. The French Nieuport monoplane, flown by Marcel Tournier of Paris, was billed as being the "first of its kind ever operated west of Chicago."

Sixty men from the South Dakota militia provided security for the event, and the South Dakota National Guard hospital corps set up a field hospital.

Other events of interest included a cutest baby contest, a meeting of the South Dakota Survivors of the Battle of Shiloh (Civil War), various vaudeville acts, a wireless telegraph exhibit, Wild Animal Show, military "rapid fire" machine gun drills, "moving pictures," an expert shooting exhibition, a Boy Scout flag demonstration, and a display of x-ray photographs from the Huron Hospital.

Editor's Note: This photograph of the State Fair Grounds entrance is taken from a still of the 1912 South Dakota State Fair film, available for viewing on the South Dakota Digital Archives. (Photo courtesy South Dakota State Historical Society-Archives)



-30-

The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council, and the State Historical Society. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen. The State Historical Society is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society's world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit www.history.sd.gov for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.